



USAID

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AFGHANISTAN

PHOTO & CAPTION

Seeing Life Through a Different Filter



In Kandahar, women are usually housebound with no opportunities to explore their city. Twenty-year-old Malalai Abdali, was yearning to tell stories and explore life through photography, but due to volatile security and society's expectations to adhere to cultural traditions, there was no outlet for her creativity.

To enable young women to go beyond their boundaries, USAID actively engaged young women in new media training. A media and photography workshop in August 2011, at the Nai Training Institute in Kandahar, created a life-altering opportunity for Kandahari women such as Malalai. Multimedia trainers instructed participants how to use a camera and how to frame and compose photographs. This enabled participants to add value and meaning to their work as they went out into their communities to capture images as part of the course work.

Malalai's photographs, speaking directly to the hearts of viewers, proved to be in a class of their own. She photographed her subjects through the mesh of her burka making them look intense and dramatic.

Her mesh photos emphasize how difficult it is for Afghan female photographers to take photos

outside their restricted boundaries.

"I want to have a good media job and will continue to develop my photography skills," said Malalai. "In the past, I struggled to point out community issues. The training has caused my creativity to blossom, and now I know how to tell good stories with my camera."

The Afghan Youth Voices Festival is a six-month activity culminating in a one-week festival of events across Afghanistan as part of the USAID initiative to foster independent and innovative media.

The Afghan Youth Voices Festival media and photography workshop created the opportunity for Kandahari women to leave their homes to capture life in their communities.